PAM.
CHINA

THE CHINESE QUESTION,

BY

One who has found a Home in China for nearly 20 Years,

AND CLAIMS TO

KNOW THE PEOPLE.

Baldwin

THE CHINESE QUESTION.

The spectacle now presented by the Government of this country, in its attitude toward the Chinese, is one that ought to bring the blush of shame to the face of every honorable, fair-minded man, leaving Christianity altogether out of the question.

I propose to answer as briefly as possible, for fairness, the more prominent charges against the Chinese, offered as an excuse for persecuting them, for our Government's failing to fulfill a solemn national treaty, made with the Chinese Government, to protect the Chinese in this country; and now, finally, for perpetrating, in the face of the world and heaven, the crime of adopting a measure, by this so-called Christian Government, to forbid the poor and needy of China to come to this land.

Ye shades of the signers of our Declaration of Independence! Ye spirits of Washington and Lincoln! with what amazement must ye listen to this new rendering of the ancient principles of the Republic! "The poor and oppressed of every land *save China* are welcome to this 'land of the free and home of the brave.'"!!

But, let us consider the charges that are said to justify such partial measures:

1st. "They come here as a sort of slaves." *This is wholly untrue.* They come here as voluntarily as do the immigrants from across the Atlantic. A needy family has heard of "King Sang," "the Golden Hill," as they call California, and all the family unite in saving their meager earnings to send one of their number to this far-famed "golden hill," with the hope that he will return able to make life more comfortable for them all.

Some of them came here by *invitation* to build our railroad, which has opened up the great West and enriched

men who are now persecuting this very people. They did their work faithfully to the end, and have left that much at least of permanent benefit to us. But, asks one, "Are they not in a sense owned, and bound to obey the six Chinese companies?" Not at all. These companies are simply benevolent and protective societies, such as are common in China, and much to be commended. The Ningpo men, in Foochow, for business purposes, form a Ningpo guild, and the Canton men, in Shanghai, form a Canton guild. The object of these guilds is to help each other in a friendly way, to relieve any member of the guild in need, to care for them if sick, &c. They all agree to certain rules by which they shall be governed, but the whole thing is entirely voluntary. Any one is at liberty to enter and to withdraw. It is in no sense a secret society or an immigration bureau.

2d. "They are of the lowest classes." They are of *exactly* the same class as the immigrant from other lands. The *needy poor*, with few exceptions, must ever be the immigrant class. Those who come to us across the Pacific are largely from the respectable farming class, who fall into laundry work, shoemaking, &c., &c., because these branches of industry are chiefly open to them. If they desired real estate to farm, I think they would find no little difficulty in purchasing. I have no fear of the Chinese immigrants suffering in comparison with those who come across the Atlantic. It is not the Chinaman who is too lazy to work, and goes to the almshouse or jail. It is not he who reels through our streets, defies our Sabbath laws, deluges our country with beer, and opposes all work for temperance and the salvation of our sons from the liquor curse. It is not the man from across the Pacific who commits the fearful crimes we read of in our daily papers, and who is longing to put his hand to our political wheel and rule the United States.

3d. "China is so crowded that there is great danger of her pouring out her millions and flooding our land!"

4th. "They do not come to stay, but just to make what they can in a short time, and go back home and take their earnings."

I place the 4th right beside the 3d before replying to the latter, just to see how lovely and consistent they look together! If the 3d is dangerous, surely the 4th should encourage our terror-stricken souls at such an irruption! And yet the same man will plead both these arguments in almost the same breath against the Chinese!

But let us consider No. 3. "The Chinese will come in

such numbers as to flood our land." In 25 years 150,000 Chinese have come to this country. That is to say, with all the pressure of their poverty and all the promise this land has held out to them of successful industry, together with the facilities provided for a speedy and cheap transit hither, in a quarter of a century, *fewer* have come here from China than in a few months of the last year alone from Europe! What curious inequality of mind leads us to fear the flooding by the few, while we open wide the gates to the many? Again, the Chinese here are almost to a man from the Canton Province; it is a *local* immigration. The whole nature and education of the Chinese are against removing from one place to another, even in their own country. Only the greatest pressure of circumstances can induce them to leave their native place. Generation after generation of the same family have lived in the same locality. The home of their fathers, the graves of their ancestors, filial piety, everything that a Chinaman holds dear, gathers around and binds him to his native place. It is said that there are only 100 surnames in all China. The very word for *people* is *pak sang*, "the hundred surnames." A large village often has but two surnames, such as Ting and Tang. To these two families the village belongs, and has belonged for ages, and all their interests are centered there. The sacredness of family ties is nowhere more carefully taught than in China. A cousin of the second degree is called brother, and all family ties imply duties which cannot be shirked. The Chinaman, from his earliest days, is taught that his highest duty is to his parents; and upon the condition of obeying, serving and supporting them in this life, and making sacrifices to their spirits after death, depends his prosperity here and his eternal welfare. This universally recognized duty must ever be a great obstacle to emigration, and the sure pledge of their return to their native land. We may call all this foolish; but I honor the Chinaman for his obedience to his convictions of right, and think many a Christian might learn a much-needed lesson from his zeal. As to the charge that a Chinaman forfeits his citizenship if he is absent from his country beyond a certain time, I answer that is all nonsense. There is no such law and no such penalty.

And now for charge 4th.

"They do not come to stay, but to make all they can in a short time, and then return home and take their earnings with them."

Intelligent men, who know too much to fear a Chinese flood, and who are too just to countenance their persecution, still

quote this argument. Let us look at it. Of course it neutralizes and renders harmless No. 3 at once! It is true they do not come to stay; and I can't help saying what a pity some others do not follow their example! Did they do so, I would not have heard, as I did last night, this apology from an intelligent man for the corruption of our political parties, "You must remember," said he, "all we have to contend with—that foreigners control our politics." The problem of a successful republican government, with universal suffrage, has not yet been worked out.

However, there is nothing in our Constitution or laws which defines the length of time any one must promise to stay in this land to secure him the right of entrance. But this objection becomes the veriest mockery when we remember the *welcome* we give these strangers, and how *comfortable* we make them while here! The mud thrown by Christian boys (of course they are not heathen) upon the snowy clothes, ready to iron after the weary washing by the Chinese laundry man, the broken windows, the stones, the grossest abuse by people and press, the palpable falsehoods against the Chinese published by many of the most respectable papers; all these *do not* strike one as the wisest arguments a Christian people can use to induce the Chinese to stay! But if this *is* an argument against the Chinaman, what about the American in China? He goes there for the express purpose of making all the money he can, whether it be from tea, silk or opium, to spend as little as possible in China—importing his stores and clothing from London, New York or San Francisco—and only buying perishable meats, vegetables and fruit in China, and bringing home with him all his earnings—ten dollars to every one the Chinaman takes out of our country—and I regret to say not always leaving a blessing or an improved people behind him.

From the careful examination and statistics of a reliable writer, I find that the Chinese in one year alone expended of their earnings in this country $6,000,000, and paid to our revenues in taxes and customs $2,400,000, while they sent out of the country only $2,000,000, leaving a large balance of millions here. Moreover, if the Chinese are decently treated, they may stay in considerable numbers. They do not go anywhere with the purpose of staying, but when well treated and prosperous, they do settle down, as in Singapore and other places in the Straits, where there are now many Chinese who have never seen China.*

5th. "They do not bring their wives here." The customs

* It should have been added that they sell their labor per, entering not more than its value (or else it would not be purchased), and leave the entire profits of it behind them. This they cannot take away with them.

of most heathen nations seclude women. In China there is more than this custom to keep the wife at home. According to the education of the Chinese, it is the highest duty of the wife to be the keeper at home, and especially to serve the parents of her husband in his absence, and to attend to the affairs of the family, which she often does with great skill. It would indeed be an unfilial son who left his parents without the care of his wife. This may strike the American (in whom filial piety is a virtue fast fading out) as most foolish. But then it is certainly no crime and no reasonable cause for excluding the Chinese from the United States. This may tend to immorality, but not to the extent practised by not a few early residents of California who had families in both the East and West. In the Chinaman's case the first wife is the chief always. This cannot be said of American polygamists! I regret to say that such an argument carried out would speedily terminate the residence of many an American and European in China. This argument had as well not be pressed in the face of Mormonism and the well-known lives of various people not a thousand miles from any body!

6th. "They endanger our morals, especially by their evil women." And will the Californian use such an argument? The horrors that I heard and facts that polluted the air in San Francisco, and smaller towns, come up to me so vividly that I am amazed that people living in *so frail a "glass house"* dare to throw a stone like this at the more respectable house of the Chinese. There are many good people in California, and I honor them for their struggle against wrong. But, alas! the reputation of San Francisco and other places is badly tattered. I shall never forget the shock I experienced when just after our arrival in San Francisco from China, we were on our way to church one *Sunday* morning, and a man went shouting through the street—"sweet oranges, fresh peas for sale!" and our Chinese servant quietly remarked, "Teacheress, it is just about the same here as in China, isn't it?" I then awakened to the realization of the fact that I was in a Christian city where the Sabbath was not regarded. But to return to the Chinese women. So far as I have seen, they are at least decently *clothed*, which is more than I can say of the white creatures of the same class I saw in San Francisco. There is also this difference. The latter have *chosen* their life of sin in the full blaze of the saving Christian light of this land, while the Chinese woman in San Francisco had probably had no choice in her life, and certainly *no light* from

Christianity. She is, in a large majority of cases, more sinned against than sinning.

But let the pleader of this last refuge of lies tread carefully here, and note the following:

"In 1872 the Legislature of California passed a law creating a Commissioner of Immigration, with power to examine immigrants, and to forbid the landing of those whom he should find to be criminals, or lewd persons, or afflicted with contagious diseases. Under the provisions of that Act the Commissioner forbade the landing of 22 Chinese women from the steamer Japan, which arrived in August, 1873. The women dealers, by the help of lawyers of a certain class, obtained a writ of *habeas corpus*, and brought the women on shore before Judge Morrison of the Fourth District Court. The Judge sustained the Commissioner, and remanded the women back to the Steamship Company to be returned to China.

"Immediately after Judge Morrison's decision was pronounced, Messrs. Edgerton and Quint obtained a writ of *habeas corpus* from Chief Justice Wallace, of the Supreme Court, upon the allegation that the women were illegally detained by the Captain of the Japan. The writ was executed and the women escorted back to the county jail."

The Supreme Court of the State of California sustained the ruling of Judge Morrison, and the women were a second time remanded back to the steamer. But the women dealers and their unprincipled lawyers then applied to the United States District Court, procured a third writ of *habeas corpus*, and the case was tried before that tribunal, which *reversed* the decision of Judge Morrison and the Supreme Court of California, pronounced the law under which the Commissioner had acted unconstitutional, and ordered the women to be allowed their freedom. Respectable Chinese merchants in San Francisco stood ready to pay the passage of such women right back to China. The Chinese Government itself (without doubt) would quickly respond to any action on the part of our Government for excluding Chinese vice, though it might in fairness insist upon a speedy clearing of its own ports of like women, gamblers and drunkards, *not* Chinese! We have been forced to endure the company of *such* white women (Americans) on our way to China, and have felt that the less we said about our national morality the better. *Any* and *all evils* found to-day in Chinatown, San Francisco, are simply a *shame* to the authorities of that city, and *entirely* under

their control. There are no people more amenable to law than the Chinese.

The authorities in Hong Kong ordered the Chinese shopkeepers there to put up glass fronts to their shops, and it was done. But alas! it is by no means a secret that the very officers who in San Francisco by solemn oath are bound to do their utmost to stop crime, wink at it for the sake of the bribes with which their hands are black. Evil men come from China as from other countries, but the bad Chinaman can be sent back or controlled more easily than others. Chinese gambling dens and brothels can be utterly rooted out of Chinatown whenever the high-minded officers of that city can consent to forego the bribes they now receive. When they have attained to so high a state of grace as this, and Chinatown is cleaned up, I would humbly suggest that if they put on their glasses and look around, they may find a few other like dens not imported from China; and like places may be found in Philadelphia, New York, Brooklyn, and the model city of Boston itself, to say nothing of the moral (?) cities of Chicago and Cincinnati. "Consistency, thou *art* a jewel!!"

In the meanwhile let the American people meditate upon the answer of the President of one of the "Six Chinese Companies" in San Francisco, to Mayor Bryant, in reply to his condemnation of Chinese prostitution. "Yes, yes, Chinese prostitution *is* bad. What do you think of German, French, Spanish and American prostitution? Do you think them good?" This astute heathen wondered at the Christian (save the mark!) silence and forbearance toward the *many*, and the loud *horror-stricken* hoot after the few. Very stupid and heathenish the question, no doubt; but then we *can't* make a law to prevent even the Chinese from thinking, questioning, and drawing conclusions! "*First*, cast out the *beam* out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of *thy brother's* eye!"

7th. "The Chinese cheapen labor, and throw others out of employ." The cry not so many years ago in California was against the exorbitant prices demanded for labor. A few had command of the labor market. To-day it is against the cheap labor of the Chinese; but this is largely used for strangers who are ignorant of Western prices.

There is *absolutely no such thing as* cheap labor on the Pacific Coast. An untrained Chinaman commands from $3 to $5 a week and board in kitchen employ; Chinese cooks from $20 to $30 a month and board. Is this cheap labor?

A gentleman from the Pacific Coast, whom I met in Rome

not long since, made to me, as one of his charges against the Chinese, this one of "cheap labor," but quickly yielded the point when he found that I was posted on prices in California. *The Chinaman takes the place of no one who will do the work as well as he*, but when unfaithfulness, dishonesty, and utter disregard of the employer's interests are superseded by faithfulness, honesty, and a recognition of duty to give a fair return of work for wages received, who will complain of such a change?

For years in this my native land I had an experience—yea, *many experiences*—with American, Irish and colored servants. For *twenty* years I have had Chinese servants in China, and if I could now choose my servants or employees of any kind from all the world, I would take the Chinese *every time*, for faithfulness, *courtesy*, *honesty*, neatness, and everything else that makes a servant valuable, not forgetting gratitude and affection in return for kindness received. Not but that the Chinese can be spoiled by want of system, &c., but in a house where there is any proper system and order they are the best servants in the world, and are far less untruthful and dishonest than the mass of our servants here; and this I assert, not alone from my own long experience, but from the wail that reaches me wherever I go, from the housekeepers of the land. I know of no greater temporal blessing to-day that could be given to the homes of this land, than that of Chinese servants; and if half the energy expended by the Californians in persecuting the Chinese had been kindly used in distributing them in little companies over our country (they are open to reason and kindness), we would have been saved a *very dark* page in our history, and many a home would have been blessed. Recently I met an American merchant whom I had known many years in China. After his first greeting he exclaimed, as from the "abundance of his heart," "we don't know how to live here! It *isn't* living, with such servants as we have here. We thought that we would treat them just as we did our Chinese servants—*trust* them, and *let them go right along* in the work they were paid to do; but we soon learned to our cost that we could do nothing of the kind. I thought I always did appreciate the Chinese, but I find I have not measured them at half their worth!" And it was not alone Chinese *servants* that he praised; but it would amaze some of our business men here to have heard the contrast this able business man drew between Chinese and American merchants.

He *did not* say that it was the Chinese merchant that he

had to be the most guarded with in business transactions! Passing recently from China to India, on our way to Calcutta, we called at Singapore and Penang, and were told there *by English* residents of reliability, that the men of business integrity, wealth and good character in those islands were Chinese; and they bear a like good character in Calcutta. And yet the American voter, shutting his ears to the cry of the weary wife by his side, or even the probabilities of a most lucrative trade between China and our country, still declares the Chinaman must go; and I respond in the name of common justice and humanity, God hasten the day of their departure! The Pacific coast people will then have abundant leisure to meditate upon many a ruined industry, and there will be less money to buy votes! The Chinaman can return to his land, and truthfully say, "Confucius' teachings have made us more *courteous* to the American stranger in China than have Christ's teachings made the American toward the Chinese stranger in their land!" I must say with shame and confusion of face that the *heathen Government* of China has kept its treaty in our protection in China, while the Christian Government of this land has failed to keep its treaty with China. Chinese have been taxed when *entering* the country and when *leaving* it; invidious taxation in many ways, which could be enumerated, has been put upon them, and laws enacted especially against them.

They have been beaten and killed, and no one has redressed their wrongs. Even their homes have not been their refuge. They have been compelled to pay school tax, and not allowed to enter the schools they have had to help support. If they go into the streets they are insulted, if they stay at home they are not exempt; and yet the testimony of bankers and business men who have dealings with the Chinese in any part of the world is, that there are no more reliable business men, none of higher integrity than the Chinese. Customs officials and tax collectors are compelled to acknowledge that none in the land are more prompt in the payment of their dues, and renters assure me that they have no better, more quiet, or regular paying tenants; though one renter recently told me in Philadelphia ("the City of Brotherly Love"), he had had to expend some $40 in mending the windows of one Chinese tenant—windows demolished by the *lads* of the city! I here assert, fearless of any counter statement *capable of proof*, that the Chinese to-day, as a whole, are the most industrious, quiet,

patient, forbearing (O, *how* forbearing!), honest, and sober immigrants in this land.

8th. "They look so impassive, keep themselves to themselves as though they had no hearts." Well, it is amazing that they don't run into our arms! We could aim our *stones* more surely then, and the *mud* would spatter more generally! "Love your enemies," "pray for them who curse you," are *Christian* teachings that, alas! the "heathen Chinee" has never learned. He has learned the lesson *not* to strike back *well* in this land. My own Christian Chinese servant, a *courteous*, faithful man, is learning this *Christian* grace in a hard school. One Sabbath day, in a respectable part of the "City of Churches," he took my two-year-old boy into the street, and soon they returned, with their hands full of stones thrown at them, any one of which might have killed my little boy had it struck him.

For the first time, the man showed indignation and a desire to resent these insults; and then, more for the sake of the little boy he so tenderly loves and cares for than for himself, said he, "Teacheress, may I go after them if they do it again?" And I, with an effort, answered, "No; remember the *Christ* doctrine, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you,'" to which he assented, and again took up his life of forbearance. And *I* knew all the time that any other man (American) would have either *caned* those stone-throwers or handed them over to the police! And now I have conscientiously and fairly, I think—warmly, with a righteous indignation, I admit—answered the popular charges against the Chinese. Some one is ready to exclaim, "If all you have said is true, and we can't say it is not, *what is* the source of this anti-Chinese howl?" My friend, your question is easily answered. The immigrant from across the Atlantic desires and intends to command the labor market here, not only to rule in our homes, but in every other department of industry into which he enters, to fix prices of labor, to strike for more, to do or not to do, without fear of competition. An efficient competitor is his only obstacle.

He *now* holds the "*balance of power*" at the polls, and he says to the politician: "My competitor, who stands in the way of my inalienable right to rule, *must* go," and down goes the politician on his knees before this "balance of power."

This is the *secret* of the hate against the Chinese.

And here, in speaking of the immigrant from across the

Atlantic, I want to except the good men and women who come to us, who *are* honest, industrious and sober, and who are a strength to our country. I regret that I have not, however, found more than one among them (and she a recent convert) who stood on the just side of the Chinese question. But I don't expect more of respectable Germans and Irish than of the same class of Americans.

I want further to say that there are good, honest men in the East who really believe the miserable lies concocted in the West against the Chinese; but I cannot regard even such as excusable. Certainly in these days of intelligence and facilities for obtaining information, some near approach to truth could be reached, and should be, before men vote to exclude a race from the rights granted freely to others. But, unfortunately, I find that men who read newspaper statements on other subjects with eyes open and brains alert, just swallow without questioning anything and everything said against the Chinese; *vide* the recent popular newspaper paragraph that the Chinese Government had beheaded a Chinese student *in Hong Kong* for falling in love with an American girl! If the reader and editor *did not know* that the Chinese Government does not punish its subjects for being smitten with the charms of the foreign fair one, they at least ought to have known that Hong Kong is an English colony, and that the Chinese Government does not behead its love-stricken subjects under the shadow of the British flag! And yet this paragraph has been quoted to me against the Chinese by men of great intelligence! If the Chinese people are what the American fancy paints them, then the conundrum remains how a beneficent Creator could permit *one-third* of humanity to be of this "vile race." But knowing them as I do, not from newspaper items and the hatred of the "balance of power," but from a personal knowledge of all classes of the people in their own country, knowing them to be *industrious* beyond any other people, patient under trial, cheerful under burdens, fond of learning to such an extent that they have a literary instead of a moneyed aristocracy, showing a respect to age almost unknown to this land, filial piety the central virtue around which all others cluster, and upon which their present and eternal welfare hangs, *the* virtue which ever takes them back to their native land and the graves of their fathers—*knowing* all these to be the marked characteristics of the great Chinese people, I no longer wonder that the Creator has made one-third of the human race after the Chinese pattern, and only, nay, less than 50,000,000 Americans.

Nor do I wonder that He has given to them a country greater in extent than our own, and as rich in minerals, soil and scenery. I only wonder that He has given to us (who in more respects than one are not the equals of the Chinese) the crowning blessing of humanity—a knowledge of Christ—instead of giving it to the greater people. Let us see to it that in our treatment of that people we offend not the King of Kings. He may bear long, but in the end we shall certainly "reap what we sow," as a nation as well as individuals.

Finally: I appeal to the *Christian* men of the country. I *know* that Christianity is *not* a failure; it is not in this country; it is not in China. It *can* make men true, honorable, morally courageous, and just and kind to all men. Wherever these fruits are wanting it is not the *fault* of Christianity, but because the true work is not there. Ignorance that can be enlightened can never excuse a wrong to our fellow man. Have the Christians in this land tried to save the Chinese and to show them that our Christianity is *the* treasure that makes this nation to differ from theirs in anything we have of greater good? Do the Chinese come back to us in China favorably inclined toward Christianity and ready to report well upon it to their families and friends?

England has placed an awful obstacle in the way of mission work in China, in forcing the opium trade on that people, and holding it there to the ruin of millions in spite of the expostulations of the Chinese Government and the wail of agony that goes up from almost every home of that land. And now the other great Christian nation of the world, our own United States, takes her stand beside England to block our work for China!

We who go to that land not for dollars but for souls, stand amazed and heartsick at the two greatest Christian nations of the world, at the obstacles they are placing in the way of Christianizing the greatest heathen nation in the world. Surely the blotting out three-quarters of the distance separating China and Japan from the United States, by the Pacific Mail steamer line, has a more important significance than simply to expedite the transit of tea and silks to our country, the filling of our merchants' pockets and the increase of trade.

The political economist may see nothing more, but the Christian man must see a far more important result in the placing of the greatest heathen nation of the earth almost beside the greatest Christian nation. If we fail to do our

duty, the time will come when we will certainly see and mourn that failure.

The Chinese were partial to Americans because we did not force the opium curse upon them. The trade of that rich country is yet to be developed. We might have had a large share in the development of its mines, railroads, &c., which is sure soon to come. But as we are now doing, we are not only blocking the way of the Missionary in China, but manufacturing a sentiment there against us. In this, too, we will reap as we have sown!

ESTHER E. BALDWIN.

109 St. James' Place,
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March 9, 1882.

P. S.—I have been greatly rejoiced at the report of Senator Hoar's manly and just speech, which has come to hand since I began to write; and I beg him and the few others, such as Senators Dawes, Hawley and Platt, who have stood for our ancient principles and the right, to accept my humble thanks. The prospect is that they will receive so few that those of even one woman may count for something. I wish also to gratefully acknowledge the manly and truthful editorial of the New York *Independent*, in its issue of to-day (March 9). It is such as was to be expected of a paper that has always stood by its convictions of right, without regard to present expediency, or the risk of losing popularity.

E. E. B.